TOLERATION Tolerated:

OR,

A late Learned Bishops Opinion concerning Toleration of Religion.

With some brief Observations thereon.

READER,

I *Here present thee with the Opinion of a* Dead * Bishop, *since the Living are* Untoward, *and* will not Speak; *and indeed, should all Men be silent, not only the* Dead, *but the very* Stones *would speak, in such a Just and Righteous Cause as is that of His Majesty's: But I will not further detain thee, only desire thee to observe with me, the great Difference betwixt* One *who had no other Ends to serve, but those of Truth and Christianity, and those who may be justly suspected to have a great many little private and particular ends of their Own.*

* *Bishop* Taylor *in his Liberty of Prophesy*, p. 213. Sect. 16. *his Question is*, Whether it be lawful for a Prince to give Toleration to several Religions.

First, 'TIS a great Fault that Men do call the several Sects of Christians, by the Names of several Religions. The Religion of JESUS CHRIST is the Form of sound Doctrine and wholesome Words, which is set down in Scripture indefinitely; actually conveyed to us by plain Places, and separated as for the Question of *Necessary* or *not Necessary*, by the Symbol of the Apostles. Those *Impertinencies* which the *Wantonness* and *Vanity* of some Men, the *Peevishness* and *Moroseness* of others, have Commenced, which their Interest have promoted; which serve not *Truth* so much as their *own Ends*, are far from being distinct Religions; for matters of Opinions are no part of the Worship of God, nor in Order to it, but as they promote Obedience to his Commandments; and when they contribute towards it, are in that Proportion, as they contribute Parts and Actions, and minute particulars of that Religion they do or pretend to serve. And such are all the Sects and Pretences of Christians, but Pieces and Minutes of Christianity, if they do serve the Great End, as every Man for his own Sect and Interest, believes for his share it doth.

Secondly, *TOLERATION* hath a double Sence or Purpose; for sometimes by it, Men understand a publick Licence and Exercise of a Sect; sometimes it is only an Indempnity of the Persons, privately to Convene, and to Opine as they see Cause, and as they mean to answer to God. Both these are very much to the same Purpose, unless some Persons we are bound to Satisfie be scandalized, and then the Prince is bound to do, as he is bound to Satisfie. To God it is all one; for Abstracting from the Offence of Persons, which is to be considered, just as our Obligation is to content the Persons; it is all one, whether we indulge to them to meet publickly or privately to do Actions of Religion, concerning which, we are not perswaded that they are truly Holy. To God it is just one to be in the *Dark*, and in the *Light*, the thing is the same; only the Circumstance of publick and

COLLEGE

private, which cannot be concerned in any thing; nor can it concern any thing but Matter of Scandal, and Relation to the Minds and Fantasies of certain Persons.

Thirdly, So that to *Tolerate*, is not to *Persecute*. And the Question, *Whether the Prince may Tolerate divers Perswasions*, is no more, than *Whether he may lawfully Persecute any Man for not being of his Opinion*. Now in this Case, He is just so to Tolerate Diversity of Perswasions, as he is to Tolerate publick Actions; for no Opinion is Judicable, nor no Person Punishable but for a Sin; and if his Opinion by reason of its Managing, or its Effect, be a Sin in it self, or becomes a Sin to the Person, then as he is to do towards other Sins, so to that Opinion, or Man so Opining. But to believe so, or not so, when there is no more but meer believing, is not in his Power to enjoyn, therefore not to punish: And it is not only lawful to Tolerate disagreeing Perswasions, but the Authority of God only is competent to take Notice of it, and infallible to Determinate it, and fit to Judge; and therefore no Humane Authority is sufficient to do all those things, which can justifie the Inflicting Temporal Punishments upon such as do not Conform in their Perswasions, to a Rule or Authority, which is not only fallible, but supposed by the disagreeing Persons to be actually deceived.

Fourthly, But I consider in the *Toleration* of a differing Opinion; Religion is not properly and immediately concerned, so as in any Degree to be indangered: For it may be safe in Diversity of Perswasions, and it's also a part of Christian Religion, that the Liberty of mens Consciences should be preserved in all things, where God hath not set a Limit, and made a Restraint; that the Soul of Man should be free, and acknowledge no Master but Jesus Christ; that Matters Spiritual, should not be restrained by Punishments Corporal; that the same Meekness and Charity, should be preserved in the Promotion of Christianity, that gave it Foundation, and Increment, and Firmness, in its first Publication; that Conclusions should not be more Dogmatical, than the vertual Resolution and Efficacy of the Premises; and that the Persons should not be more certainly Condemned, than their Opinions Confuted; and lastly, that the Infirmities of Men, and Difficulties of Things, should be both put in Ballance, to make Abatement in the Definitive Sentence against Mens Persons. But then, because *Toleration* of Opinions is not properly a Question of *Religion*, it may be a Question of *Policy*: And although a Man may be a good Christian, though he believe an Error not Fundamental, and not directly or evidently Impious; yet his Opinion may accidentally disturb the publick Peace, through the Overactiveness of the Person, and Confidence of their Belief, and the Opinion of its Appendant Necessity; and therefore *Toleration* of differing Perswasions in these Cases, is to be considered upon Political Grounds; and is just so to be permitted or denied, as the *Opinions* or *Tolerations* of them may consist with the publick and necessary Ends of Government. Only this: As Christian Princes must look to the Interest of their Government, so especially must they look to the Interests of Christianity, and not call every Redargution or modest Discovery of an Established Error, by the Name of *the Disturbance of the Peace*. For it is very like, that the Peevishness and Impatience of Contradiction in the Governours, may break the Peace: Let them remember the Gentleness of *Christianity*, and the Liberty of Consciences which ought to be preserved; and let them do Justice to the Persons, whoever they are, that are peevish, provided no Man's Person be over-born by Prejudice: For if it be necessary for all Men to subscribe to the present Established Religion, by the same Reason, at another time a man may be bound to subscribe to the Contradictory, and so to all the Religions in the *World*: And they only who by their too much Confidence, intitle God to all their Fancies, and make them to be Questions of Religion, and Evidences for Heaven, or Consignations to Hell, they only think this Doctrine Unreasonable; and they are the Men that first disturb the Churches Peace, and then think there is no appeasing the Tumult, but by get-

UMI - 19

ting the Victory; but they that consider things wisely, understand, that since Salvation and Damnation depends not upon Impertinencies, and yet that Peace and Publick Tranquility may; the Prince in this case is to seek how to secure the Government, and the Issues and Intentions of that, while there is in these cases directly no Insecurity to Religion, unless by the accidental Uncharitableness of them that Dispute. Which Uncharitableness is also much prevented when the Publick Peace is secured; and no Person is on either side ingaged upon Revenge, or troubled with Disgrace, or vexed with Punishments by any Decretory Sentence against him.

It was a Wise saying of a Statesman (*Thuanus* I mean) *Hæretici qui pace data factionibus Scinduntur, Persecutione uniuntur contra Rempublicam.* If you Persecute *Hereticks* or *Discrepants*, they Unite themselves as to a *Common Defence:* If you permit them, they divide themselves upon *Private Intrest*; and the rather, if this *Intrest* was the Ingredient of the Opinion.

Fifthly, The sum is this, It concerns the Duty of a Prince, because it concerns the Honour of God, that all Vices, and every part of Ill-life, be Discountenanced and Restrained; and therefore in Relation to that, Opinions are to be dealt with; for the Understanding being to direct the Will, and Opinions to guide our Practices, they are Considerable only as they teach Impiety and Vice, as they either Dishonour God, or Disobey Him. Now all such Doctrines are to be condemned; but for the Persons Preaching such Doctrine, if they neither justifie nor approve the pretended Consequences, which are certainly Impious, they are to be separated from that Consideration; but if they know such Consequences, and allow them, or if they do not stay till the Doctrines produce Impiety, but take Sin before hand, and manage them Impiously in any sence; or if either themselves or their Doctrine do Really, and without Colour or feigned Pretence, disturb the Publick Peace and Just Intrests, they are not to be suffered. In all other Cases 'tis not only Lawful to permit them, but it is also necessary, that Princes, and all in Authority, should Persecute Discrepant Opinions. And in such Cases, wherein Persons not otherwise incompetent, are bound to reprove an Error (as they are in many.) In all these, if the Prince make restraint, he hinders men from doing their Duty, and from Obeying the the Laws of *Jesus Christ*. [So far that Learned Bishop.]

HEre this Learned and great Man (whom I think I may safely pronounce one of the greatest Ornaments which the *English* Church or Nation ever had) does not in the least Scruple or Object against His Majesty's Dispensing Power, in Tolerating differing Opinions in Religion; and saith that Religion is not properly concerned in the question, so as in any degree to be indangered; and that it may be safe in diversity of Perswasions, and that it is rather a question of Policy then Religion: Nay, he is so far from saying the Prince *may* Tolerate, that he saith he *must*, and leaves it not in his choice or power to Choose, and very fairly and candidly seems rightly to state and determine the present Controversies, *in giving to* Cæsar, *the things that are* Cæsars, *and to* God, *the things that are* God's. He sets the Prince on his Throne, and makes it his Province to look after Peace, and to take such Measures which may secure the Government, and puts it out of his Power to be concern'd with Men's Consciences. This he very justly leaves to the Managery and Conduct of the Great God; And how far His Majesty's Judgment does quadrate with this Great Man's, I shall here briefly set down. For,

Coming to the Crown of his Ancestors, he presently found himself to be the Head of a divided Body; and that all his Subjects were a Disturbed and Contending People, divided into many differing Sects and Factions; and that having had several Educations, they had several Consciences; he found also every Sect and Party fiercely carrying on their own little particular Intrests; and like Sea-men, every one praying for a Wind to carry their *own* Vessel out of the Haven, though the same Wind kept their Neighbours Vessel in the Port or it may be sunk or overturn'd it: These things he wisely considered, and thought th he had as good be a *Soveraign Shepherd*, *as Soveraign King over such a People*; therefo

ma

MI - 1990

...e it his buſineſs to look into the Cauſes of ...ch great Diſorder, and found that their ...euds and Animoſities were about the things of another World; about Truth and Falſhood, Heaven and Hell: And ſhould a People believing in ſuch things be diſturbed in their Methods, which they *thought* moſt ſuitable, and proper to obtain the one, or avoid the other, He thought (and that with great reaſon) His Kingdom here would be very Troubleſome and Uneaſie; therefore ſeeing them all Fierce and Eager, and that they would all be Judges in their own Cauſe, He undertook to decide their Differences, and to judge for them, not as to matter of Truth, but as to matter of Peace; and like a Wiſe Chymiſt, ſeeing their Differences principally roſe from the Mixture and Confuſion of things of a Heterogenial Nature, he ſeparated the one from the other, the *Spiritual* things from the *Temporal*; left the *Spiritual* to *God* and *themſelves*, to whom they moſt properly belong; and took the *Temporal* as his *juſt Right*, and due to *Himſelf*.

The Caſe ſtands thus, His Majeſty having in a manner wrought a Miracle to Appeaſe his People, *viz. To make the Winds blow from all Corners at once, that all their Reſpective Veſſels may Sail together, and none may ever want a Wind to Lanch out at his pleaſure*, One would think they ſhould all be ſatisfied; but we find they are not: And indeed, if we conſider things more narrowly, we cannot in Reaſon expect they ſhould; for things being but in their Formation and growing, if we pull the Fruit before it be ripe, we ſhall find it have but a Crude and Unſavoury Taſte: The Truth is, there has been a Diſeaſe a long time in the Government, and now it comes to be Canvaſs'd into, and ſearched, the pain in Curing makes ſome men love the Diſeaſe better than the Remedy; and rather than to be troubled with Duſt and Rubiſh, and to have a little Noiſe about their Ears, they had rather have an old rotten Houſe (which daily threatens to fall on their Heads) then to have a New One founded on a Rock, which the Rains and the Winds, the Wit of Man, or Malice of the Devil, ſhall be never able to pull down.

POSTSCRIPT

READER,

CONſcience, *which has been long loſt by ſome Gentlemen, being lately found in a Paper of* Reaſons *I have juſt now Read (which may be call'd* Conſcientia Rediviva*) I dare now let thee know, that the real cauſe of my Publiſhing this Paper was my* Conſcience. *I think really in my Conſcience, that His Majeſty is hearty and ſincere in what he propoſes, and deſigns nothing but the Good of all His Subjects in general; and that it is the Duty of every Man to Contribute ſomething towards making ſuch a Settlement as he deſires: And I think I have very good Reaſon for this my* Conſcience; *and ſo I think might all others, would they but conſider things impartially. And ſince I am got upon the buſineſs of* Conſcience, *I find there are ſeveral* Conſciences *in the Nation: There is His Majeſties* Conſcience, *the Biſhops* Conſcience, *and the* Conſciences *of all the ſeveral Sects and Diviſions of* Chriſtians *amongſt us. Now I ſhall not Examine how* Unconſcionable *ſome of theſe* Conſciences *may be, nor how they came by ſuch their* differing Conſciences, *but how (if poſſible) they may all be ſatisfied. Then in the firſt place, 'Tis but a point of good Manners to let His Majeſty's* Conſcience *be firſt ſatisfied; nay 'tis a point of Prudence too: And if men would but be wiſe and conſider things as they ought, and had really a mind that their* Conſciences *ſhould be ſatisfied, they would begin here firſt, and ſo reconcile their Duty and Intreſt; for in letting His Majeſty to have* His Conſcience, *they really ſecure their* own; *for 'tis His Majeſty's* Conſcience, *that all* Conſciences *ſhould be ſatisfied, and that none ſhall be diſturbed in any Way or Method they ſhall chooſe to obtain Eternal Life, or ſecure a Manſion in* another *World: But then it is not* His Conſcience, *that any ſhould have the power to Diſturb or Ruine their Innocent Neighbours, or be Indulged in a Liberty to chooſe what Irregular Methods they pleaſe in obtaining a Poſſeſſion in* this; *and this ſome* Unconſcionable *Men know, and are very much afraid of; and 'tis His Majeſty's* Juſtice *they dread, more then his* Perſwaſion; *and they could willingly Tolerate the* one, *ſo they might be Exempted from the* other.

FINIS.

London: Printed by *G. L.* at the *Two Swans* without *Biſhopsgate*. WITH ALLOWA...